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ABSTRACT

This study found that 55% of journalism and mass communication educators first considered college teaching while in college or within 5 years after graduating from college, while 40% did not until more than 5 years after college. Two important factors in their career decisions included a personal influence (i.e., a mentor) and media experience, particularly student publications. The findings fit Holland's theory of career development and other literature. Open-ended responses resulted in rich and heartfelt comments about teaching careers in journalism and mass communication. (Contains 23 references and 2 tables of data. Appendixes contain a "Map of Occupation According to Prestige and Sextype Ratings" from "Career Choice and Development" (Jossey Bass, 1996) and the survey instrument. (Author/RS)

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Journalism and Mass Communication Educators' Career Choices:

When and Why They Entered College Teaching

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Abstract

This study found that 55 percent of journalism and mass communication educators first considered college teaching while in college or within five years afterwards, while 40 percent did not until more than five years after college. Two important factors in their career decisions included a personal influence (i.e., a mentor) and media experience, particularly student publications. The findings fit Holland's theory of career development and other literature. Open-ended responses resulted in rich and heartfelt comments about JMC teaching careers.

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Journalism and Mass Communication Educators' Career Choices:

When and Why They Entered College Teaching

Career choice and development is a heavily researched field with established theories and emerging ones that draw on a variety of disciplines, such as education, sociology, and psychology. It is a complex and important area of research relevant to journalism and mass communication (JMC) educators.

In the third edition of *Career Choice and Development*, a key resource in the field, Brown, Brooks and associates wrote,

> Career development is, for most people, a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and, typically, continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society. Each person undertaking this process is influenced by a great number of factors, including family, personal values and aptitudes, and social context. Because of the centrality of work in most people's lives, it is important that we strive to understand the career development process and how it can be influenced to benefit individuals as well as the greater society. (xv)

Published research examines career choice and development among JMC professionals and students entering JMC programs. However, research into the career choice and development of JMC educators is slim.

Rational for study

When and why do individuals become college and university journalism and mass communication teachers? Are their personality traits and aptitudes, life experiences, family backgrounds, etc. that increase or decrease the likelihood of a person entering both a JMC professional career and a JMC academic/teaching career?

It is important to search for answers to these questions for at least three reasons. First, as the authors note above, work is central to our lives and understanding the career development process better will help us, in turn, understand our roles more clearly. Second, research into career choice and development is important for JMC educators to better recruit young people into the field and to advise those who enter our programs. Third, Becker, et al. (1999) point out that although undergraduate JMC enrollments have increased every year since 1993, graduate enrollments have dropped 6.3 percent since 1995. The authors express concern that journalism and mass communication programs are producing an inadequate number of persons with advanced degrees to train future undergraduates (pp. 20-21). A clearer understanding of career choice and development will help us, as teachers and advisers, to more effectively identify and groom our replacements.

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study was to survey journalism and mass communication educators (specifically, members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication) and ask them to pinpoint when they decided to pursue a college/university teaching career and share, via an open-ended question, why they did so.

Two main questions guided the study:

1. When did journalism and mass communication educators first consider a college teaching career?
2. Why did journalism and mass communication educators decide to enter college teaching?

Literature review

ERIC searches for "career choice(s)" and "career(s)" in the title of articles in journals with the word journalism resulted in 29 articles between 1973 and 2000. Twelve of the articles came from *Journalism Educator* or the renamed *Journalism and Mass Communicator Educator*, 12 from *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, and five from *Journalism Quarterly*.

Twenty-seven of the 29 articles covered a variety of issues related to high school, undergraduate, and entry-level career choice and development, such as Bowers (1974); Burgoon, et

al. (1987); Smith (1987); Endres and Wearden (1990); Dodd, et al. (1991); Feldman (1995); Hilt (1996); and Wu (2000).

Just two of the articles dealt with career choice and development issues related to JMC educators. In "Some journalists not happy with switch to teaching career," DeLong (1984) surveyed 145 full-time faculty members with professional media backgrounds who had been teaching in accredited news editorial sequences for five years or less. He found that the faculty members "got less money for heavier workloads than in the profession they left behind. And they were not pleased with the pressure put on them to publish and attain tenure." Furthermore, of interest to this study, he found although most (56 percent) of the respondents got into journalism education because they wanted to teach, while 17 percent got out primarily because they were disillusioned with the media. In the conclusion, DeLong asked, "What can these bitter ex-journalists be teaching those who would become journalists? Couldn't strong disillusionment affect education in the classroom?" (17).

In "Dimensions of career burnout among educators" (1995), Dillon and Tanner summarized five studies between 1982 and their study that examined the professional satisfaction of mass media educators. They wrote, "As a whole, the five studies show a largely contented journalism and mass communication faculty population, one satisfied with the rewards of their profession. However, a significant minority has been identified who are unhappy with working conditions, the quality of their students, their salary levels, and the onslaught of additional work responsibilities" (5). In addition, Dillon and Tanner noted, "There is no evidence [across most demographics] that professors of mass communication are much different from their peers in other disciplines" (4).

Weaver and Wilhoit's (1988) profile of JMC educators was one of the five studies Dillon and Tanner summarized. Weaver and Wilhoit surveyed nearly 900 full-time journalism and mass communication educators at four-year colleges and universities in the United States, including those not listed in the AEJMC directory. They examined 12 research questions, including the size of the workforce and geographical distribution, age and gender, ethnic and religious origins, parents'

occupation, rank, politics, education, media experience, and various aspects concerning job conditions and satisfactions and the educators' professional culture.

They noted that respondents listed hundreds of different reasons for entering journalism education and most indicated more than one influence. But, "[a]midst this potpourri of influences, a few common threads are apparent" (19). These threads were:

- A little more than a third of the respondents "cited the people of higher education as career-choice influences." Those "people" influences included: the encouragement of a college professor or administrator and the enjoyment of working with students.
- A fourth of the respondents mentioned factors "intrinsic to subject matter," such as liking the subject area or research or wanting to improve journalistic quality.
- About a fourth mentioned some aspect of "media experience had led them into college work," including scholastic media work but also non-scholastic media, public relations or advertising.
- For about 18 percent, "high school teachers, parents, friends—non-university people—played a role in getting them into journalism education."
- For another 18 percent, academic working conditions were factors leading them into the field.

Weaver and Wilhoit noted, "The highly pluralistic influences on journalism education as a career choice appear somewhat in contrast to those of other academic fields." Generally, undergraduate school experiences are key determinants of entry into an academic field (Bowen and Schuster, 1986). "The college experience is important for many journalism educators, but professional work and external background factors are more likely to influence their career choice than in other fields" (20).

Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education (1996) by Betty Medsger surveyed three groups: 1,041 print and broadcast journalists, 500 newsroom recruiters and supervisors, and 446 university journalism educators. The Freedom Forum commissioned this

major study, which asked the educators "Were any of the following reasons why you became a teacher?" The responses were:

95% Enjoy working with students
68% Wanted more time for reflection and discussions about profession
65% Wanted more time to research issues in journalism and contribute to advancement of knowledge
60% Needed change of pace
56% Thought I'd like to teach more than being a journalist
52% Liked journalism but was ready to pass it on to the next generation
32% Wanted a more relaxed life
23% Wanted security of tenure
10% No longer liked being a journalist. (84)

Riffe, Salomone and Stempel III (1999) published the results of their survey of over 1,500 AEJMC members. They obtained demographic data as well as ratings of institutional and colleague support, concerns with workplace issues, and job satisfaction. Their study did not include any items about when/why the respondents choose a college teaching career.

In summary, the literature reveals data on a variety of aspects about journalism and mass communication educators in the United States. Career choice and development has been examined in at least two instances as part of the *Winds of Change* report and Weaver and Wilhoit's study. The major findings are:

- In most matters, journalism and mass communication educators are not much different than their peers in other fields; however, in regard to career choices to enter teaching, JMC educators are more pluralistic in their reasons.
- Personal influences, media experience, subject matter, and academic working conditions are the leading factors for JMC educators to select a teaching career.

Career choice and development literature

Summarizing career choice and development literature is a daunting task. An ERIC search for "career choice" resulted in over 8,300 entries. A search for "career choice" in education lowered the number to 932. The author refined the search narrowly and selected a handful of citations pertinent to this study. *Career Choice and Development* (Brown, et al., 1996) is one of the field's key books. In the third edition, the authors present the major theories of career development

and choice that currently influence either research or practice, along with presenting four emerging theories.

Holland's theory, first introduced in 1959, has become a major force in applied psychology. "More has been written about John Holland's typology of persons and work environments than any other theory topic in the history of career psychology," according to Spokane, who wrote the chapter on this theory in *Career Choice and Development* (34). Four items provide an overview of the model:

1. In our culture, most persons are categorized as one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional.
2. There are also six model environments with the same names.
3. People search for environments that will let them exercise skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles.
4. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment. (39-40)

Any individual, in Holland's theory, may "resemble one, two, or all six of the Holland types. The pattern of scores and resemblance is called a 'subtype'" (p. 41). Large numbers of studies have been done to examine the "degree of fit or interaction between individuals of different Holland types and subtypes in different work environments" (p. 54). Each of the types has a characteristic repertoire of behaviors that it is likely to employ in work situations. For example, under stress, each type may show a slightly different reaction. According to Spokane, "The system has been subjected to more tests and analyses than any other model of career development. A surprising amount (though not all) of this research has been supportive" (62). The theory is popular because of its empirical support and practical application.

Appendix A contains a "Map of occupations according to prestige and sextype ratings" that uses the four Holland fields. Journalists, labeled with an A for the artistic field, are in the neutral range for sextype (gender) and slightly above 60 on a 0 (low) to 90 (high) prestige rating. Editors also have an A for the artistic field, but the sextype rating is left of neutral toward masculine. High school teacher and history professor (both with an S for the social field) and writer (an A for

artistic) are three other occupations in the same general area of the map. College JMC professors are not listed but the implications are that if they were, they would be located in the same general area on the map, generally gender neutral with an A (artistic) label, S (social) and I (investigative) subtypes and a prestige rating in the 55 to 70 range. According to Holland's typology, life goals for (1) artistic types include publishing stories, (2) social types include helping others, becoming a competent teacher, and (3) investigative types include making a theoretical contribution.

Along with *Career Choice and Development*, various journal articles help to illuminate career choice and development issues relevant to JMC educators.

In "Why teach? Altruism and career choice among nontraditional recruits to teaching" Serow (1993) pointed out that nontraditional or second-career teachers constitute an increasingly important source of teacher supply. He explained that prior research described such individuals as "highly altruistic in intent as their decision to change careers tends to be based largely on the desire to 'give something back to the community.'" Serow examined the background, experience, and career orientation of 26 prospective late-entry teachers ranging in age from 23 to 50. Four main patterns emerged, and a "common thread across these classifications was the tendency to view teaching principally as a means of enhancing self-efficacy or other aspects of self-satisfaction" (197). The four patterns Serow identified were: extenders, subject-oriented, practical, and rectifiers. They are defined as such:

- Extenders are those whose interest in teaching can be seen as an extension or continuation of well-established beliefs or behaviors. The connection is often with an earlier occupation … or with parental or voluntary activities.
- Subject-oriented respondents view teaching as a chance to work in a particular academic or vocational discipline.
- Practical interviewees cited security, scheduling or simply the availability of work as the primary basis for their attraction to teaching.

- Rectifiers see their earlier career decisions as fundamentally incompatible with their personal goals and needs. The delayed entry into teaching, then, represents an attempt to correct an error that they attribute to a desire to please others. (202)

Wong (1994) attempted to determine whether future teachers, particularly students of color, can be identified at the seventh and eighth grade levels. He found that it was possible and that male students and students with negative perceptions of the school/classroom environment were less inclined to express interest in teaching. Students who felt part of the school/classroom environment were more apt to consider teaching as a career choice. Asian students had a more positive perception of the school/classroom environment than African-American and Hispanic groups; European-Americans were no more likely to consider teaching as a career than any other group.

In "Career choice of education" Place (1997) examined race, gender, and career motivation, their interactions, a self-efficacy measure, and the six Holland codes for relationships when choosing a teaching career. He found that respondents who were motivated by either personal satisfaction or former role models were more likely to choose teaching than those motivated by financial reward. He also found that Holland's social category correlated well with choosing teaching.

In "Who gets into teaching?" Shindler (1998) explored cognitive style as a factor in predicting teaching as a career choice. He examined pre-service elementary education teachers and found that their cognitive styles were similar to practicing teachers. That style, in general, was "more extroverted than introverted; more concrete-minded sensates than abstract-thinking intuitives; more of the harmony-seeking feeling type than the logic-needing thinking type; and much more structured, sequentially thinking judgers than spontaneous, flexible thinking perceivers." Shindler wrote, "We know from research into cognitive styles that teachers as a whole have some distinguishing characteristics … For example, compared to the general population, we tend to be more practical-minded, linear, and feeling-based" (1).

Gianakos (1999) presented four career-choice patterns developed in late adolescence/early adulthood—stable, conventional, multiple-trial, and unstable. The stable and multiple-trial groups

had significantly higher career decision-making self-efficacy than the other two groups. In addition, the stable group was more likely to have professionals in their chosen fields as role models.

Gillespie (1999) identified strategies for attracting orchestra students to the string teaching profession, with respondents indicating that school orchestra directors should become role models by demonstrating their "love of music, making learning enjoyable, providing students with teaching opportunities, discussing the rewards of teaching, and challenging students musically."

In review, career choice and development literature revealed that

- Writers, editors, journalists, and teachers cluster around the A (artistic), S (social), and I (investigative) fields in Holland's typology,
- Late-entry teachers, which would describe most journalism and mass communication educators, tend to enter the field for altruistic reasons rather than financial reasons. Late-entry teachers want to "give back" and view teaching as a way to enhance self-efficacy or other aspects of self-satisfaction.
- It is possible to identify students interested in teaching early.
- The cognitive styles of teachers tend to be practical, linear, and feeling-based.
- Professional role models are important to those with stable career-choice patterns.

Methodology

The author created a survey of journalism and mass communication educators with questions about their high school or college scholastic journalism experience, their decision to pursue JMC as a career, and their decision to enter college teaching. The survey (see Appendix B) was designed with an eye toward convenience and conciseness so it could be conducted via e-mail, following suggestions in *Mail and Internet Surveys* (Dillman, 2000).

The author tested the survey and response options in various e-mail software. Each survey contained a personalized salutation. Nearly all of the participants responded by using the reply option in their e-mail program and by typing an "x" to indicate their response. Sacrificing the amount of data that could be obtained for the sake of respondents' convenience, the survey contained only 14 items. The e-mail subject heading was "5-Minute JMC Educator Survey," and

recipients were told in the introduction that they could complete the survey in five minutes or less. After the 14 items, respondents were told: "The 5-minute survey is over, but if you have a little more time, you could respond to part or all of the following" three open-ended questions. The two that relate to this paper were:

- Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point(s)" in your life that prompted you to pursue journalism/mass communication as a career?
- Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point(s)" in your life that promoted you to consider college/university teaching?

Over one-third of the 301 respondents completed one or more of the open-ended items.

After selecting a random starting point in the 1999-2000 AEJMC directory, the survey was sent to every third member with an e-mail address. As a result, 556 e-mail surveys were sent; 94 were returned immediately as undeliverable. In addition, 16 surveys were refused, not useable, or returned as not applicable. Thus, the number of useable surveys was 446.

The e-mails were sent out 50 at a time over a three-week period in January and February 2000. Although respondents were given, on average, 10 days to respond, the bulk of the responses came back within 24 hours. For each group of 50, a handful of responses came back within an hour or two. The initial response for the complete mailing was 48 percent. After a reminder survey was sent, the response rose to 67.5 percent with 301 of 446 surveys returned.

Unexpected problems in the random selection process were the number of retired faculty members who maintain their AEJMC membership and graduate students. The author decided to skip retired faculty members and to send surveys only to graduate students listed as teaching assistants. In a few cases, the author also skipped over obviously non-teaching AEJMC members.

Findings: demographics of respondents

Of the 301 respondents, 63.7 percent were male and 36.3 percent were female. This corresponds closely to a published survey of AEJMC members (Riffe, et al., 1999) that found a 67.4 percent male and 32.6 percent female breakdown. In this study, 85.8 percent of the

respondents were white, while 14.2 percent were non-white, also similar to the Riffe, et al. breakdown of 88.6 percent white and 11.4 percent non-white.

By rank, 30.6 percent were full professors, 37.2 percent associate professors, 23.9 percent assistant professors, 3.7 percent instructors/lecturers, 2 percent graduate students/teaching assistants, and 2.7 percent other (such as deans).

Overall, 36.2 percent of the respondents taught at schools with an undergraduate enrollment of 100 to 400 students, 26.6 percent with 401 to 700 students, 12.6 with 701-1000 students, 10.6 percent with less than 100, 7.5 percent with 1,001 to 1,500, and 6.5 percent more than 1,500.

The survey asked: How long have you been teaching at the college/university level? (The author did not specify full-time.) Sixteen percent had been teaching five years or less, 29.3 percent six to 12 years, 30 percent 13 to 20 years, 18.2 percent 21 to 30 years, and 6.4 percent more than 30 years. Again, these findings were similar to a previous study (see *Winds of Change*, 75).

One-hundred and one of the respondents (34.2 percent) listed print journalism as their primary teaching area. Thirty-nine respondents (13.2 percent) selected broadcasting, 38 respondents (12.9 percent) listed public relations, 30 respondents (10.2 percent) indicated advertising, 17 respondents (5.8 percent) listed new media, and seven (2.4 percent) indicated photojournalism. Sixty-three respondents (21.4 percent) selected other, with the most common areas being law, ethics or mass communication courses (i.e., mass communication theory and research, media and society, or media studies). Six persons did not list their teaching area.

Research question #1

The first of the two guiding questions for this study was:

- When did journalism and mass communication educators first consider a college teaching career?

Before answering this, it is useful to answer another question—when did journalism and mass communication educators decide to pursue journalism and /or mass communication as a career? In this e-mail survey, the respondents' options were: in high school, in college, after college and other. Table 1 below shows the results.

TABLE 1 WHEN JMC EDUCATORS DECIDED TO PURSUE JMC AS A CAREER		
	Total Responses	**% of Total**
In High School	105	34.9%
In College	100	33.2%
After College	73	24.3%
Before High School	18	6.0%
Did Not Answer	5	1.6%
Total	301	100.00%

Eighteen (6.0 percent) respondents indicated they decided to pursue journalism and/or mass communication as a career before high school. One respondent said the decision took place at age 7, one at age 9, and two at age 10. One respondent never forgot that his third-grade teacher told him he would "make a good reporter." Eight others indicated they made the decision in elementary school, and five persons said they made the decision in junior high school.

Thus, 40.9 percent of the respondents decided to enter JMC as a career before or during high school. Is that low, high, or about the same as other occupations? The author had hoped to compare that finding to other fields but was unable to locate comparable data.

As would be expected, journalism and mass communication educators' decisions to pursue a college teaching career came later in life. Table 2 shows the results of the 301 respondents answering: When did you first entertain thoughts about a college/university teaching career?

TABLE 2 WHEN JMC EDUCATORS DECIDED TO PURSUE COLLEGE TEACHING AS A CAREER		
	Total Responses	**% of Total**
Before High School	5	1.7%
In High School	8	2.6%
In College	78	25.9%
5 or Less Years After College	87	28.9%
More than 5 Years After College	117	38.9%
Did Not Answer	6	1.9%
Total	301	100.00%

Few respondents (4.3 percent) considered a college/university teaching career before attending college, but once in college over 25 percent began to think about such a career and nearly 30 percent more thought about teaching college within a few years after college. Just under 40 percent did not consider a college teaching career until more than five years after college.

Research question #2

The second research question was:

- Why did journalism and mass communication educators decide to enter college teaching?

In *Winds of Change*, the over 400 journalism educators surveyed were given a list of nine items and asked if any were reasons they became a teacher. In this study, the respondents were asked an open-ended question: Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point" or "turning points" in your life that promoted you to consider college/university teaching?

Again, although this study is primarily about JMC educators' decisions to enter college teaching, it is useful to summarize the responses to another survey item: Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point" or "turning points" in your life that prompted you to consider journalism/mass communication as a career? Often respondents' comments for one mirrored the other; sometimes a respondent indicated that one answer covered both items.

Allowing an open-ended response for both turning point questions (JMC career and college/university teaching) made the data compilation task difficult, but it also allowed for individual, and often very rich, heart-felt responses. It was readily obvious that many respondents enjoyed answering the turning point questions and several said so, with comments such as "thanks for asking," "I enjoyed reminiscing," and "I liked the way you put this survey together."

Answers to "the turning point" or "turning points" to enter JMC as a career fell into seven categories: (1) a personal influence, (2) the artistic factor, (3) media exposure/experience, (4) power of the press/wanting to make a difference, (5) variety, (6) serendipity, (7) other.

Categorizing open-ended responses into the seven areas was relatively easy; however, counting the number of responses in each category was not. In many instances, respondents' answers touched upon more than one of the categories. In a few cases, respondents labeled their

"answers" as minor or major turning points. For others responses, the author selected what appeared to be the most important reason, if there were clues indicating which one it was. For many cases the author simply categorized a response based on what the educator wrote first. Despite the difficulty, it is useful to indicate the relative amount of responses for each of the seven categories. Following the italic subheads below are numbers in parenthesis that indicate the approximate number of respondents who identified each of the factors. (Over one third of the 301 respondents completed one or more of three open-ended questions.)

A personal influence (25)

The most common "turning point" JMC educators noted as their reason to enter the profession was the influence of a specific person, such as a journalism professor (noted several times), a yearbook workshop presenter, a teacher (from first grade to eighth grade), a junior high newspaper adviser, English teachers/professor (mentioned almost as many times as journalism teachers), a spouse, a grandfather who owned a newspaper, a colleague, a foreign correspondent who told exciting stories, a national celebrity (i.e., Chet Huntley, David Brinkley), and parents. Sample open-ended responses indicating the personal influence of others include:

> The key was an English professor who encouraged my natural interest and abilities in this field. His caring insight and advice at a crucial moment of decision in my life led me to my decision to major in journalism and to my career choice. I had been planning to be a cardiac surgeon.
>
> I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a good adviser at both the high school and college levels. These two men were definitely the turning points in my life, and, I believe, in many others. Not enough emphasis is placed on that mentoring relationship.
>
> Teachers as early as first grade who encouraged me to write. Later, a neighbor who worked for the biggest newspaper in town who told me to come see him when I got out of college.
>
> Finally, various mentors through my corporate career who cared for me and guided me just as teachers in high school had.

The artistic factor/early exposure to journalism (23)

One respondent said, "I enrolled in a course to learn how to use the 35mm camera I'd purchased ... it was like walking through a door and finding home." Given the A (artistic) label Holland's typology assigns to writers/journalists, it was a bit surprising that more respondents did not explicitly express an artistic urge, bent, a sense of "finding a home" as the reason they entered

journalism. However, upon further reflection, the author realized that an awareness of an artistic bent often surfaced in the answers of those respondents who indicated a leaning toward journalism early in life. Sample responses to indicate this include:

> I had always enjoyed writing. (There were several similar comments.)
>
> I have been fascinated by newspapers, magazines and word-processing tools (pencils, pens, typewriters, linotypes, presses, and computers) since I first discovered their existence.
>
> As a paperboy in a tiny Montana town with no access to broadcast media, I was the first one in town to know the news and scores.
>
> When I was 9 something moved me to want to be a newspaperman. Don't know where it came from ... maybe from reading *The Weekly Reader* at school, but it certainly has been a blessing.
>
> I was a newspaper carrier for many years, starting at age seven, and then, at age 12, I started my own route when our weekly paper turned into a daily. I had to convince my neighbors that a newspaper was important for them ... I must have convinced myself of the same.

Media experience or exposure (18)

The third most common "turning point" JMC educators noted as their reason to enter the profession involved media work, with the most common experience by far being on the staff of a high school yearbook or newspaper or radio. The turning point for a few respondents was writing for their local newspaper while in high school or getting turned on to journalism in college while working on a student publication or via an internship. Sample responses indicating the influence of scholastic journalism include:

> The biggest impact of these experiences [high school journalism] was that someone of status (a teacher) told me I was good at something. I remember little about the work itself.
>
> I began working for *The Daily Collegian* because scholastic life alone seemed empty. I enjoyed the experience; it did not seem like work. I thought to myself: "Hey, I could get paid for doing this." Soon after, I transferred to journalism.
>
> You can lust after someone from afar, but to fall in love you have to go out on a date. Student media work is the first date with a profession you hope to fall in love with.
>
> The fun and intensity of sense of purpose that I experienced working on the university student newspaper.
>
> Because I was the high school newspaper editor, the local editor reached out (through the adviser) for someone to launch a half-day internship. I was hooked.

> Oddly, my high school journalism program influenced me to pursue journalism in college even though I had absolutely nothing to do with it when I was in high school … my high school had outstanding publications. The newspaper and yearbook were recognized statewide as among the very best. Thus, I was accustomed to excellent scholastic publications and thought maybe I could contribute something to my college yearbook and later newspaper.

Power of the press/chance to make a difference (15)

The next most common "turning point(s)" JMC educators noted as reasons to enter the profession involved the power of the press and the opportunity media can provide to make a difference. Sample responses indicating these influences include:

> Recognition of the power of the First Amendment and the ability that journalism has to address social problems.

> Growing up in the South I became aware of people throughout the world through photographs in books, magazines and newspapers … and then it dawned on me that someone was out there getting the images for those of us not present. That responsibility and awareness of this often unheralded work intrigued me.

> Wanted to make a difference after becoming aware from age 11 or so of civil rights movement, Vietnam War, etc.

> I got a job in consumer product sales. "Turning point" was realization it didn't matter what toothpaste people bought. Wanted to do something that made a difference. Got job as copy clerk with news service and stayed with journalism in some form or another ever since.

Variety, serendipity (6 each) and other (4)

The remaining reasons respondents selected JMC as a career fall into three areas. First, some realized the turning point was when they saw the variety inherent in a journalism career. Second, others said the turning point was simply serendipity. They just "fell into it." Third, a few other miscellaneous reasons surfaced, including Watergate (only one specific reference) and the lure of evolving technology. Sample open-ended responses indicating variety and serendipity include:

> Mass comm let me continue to dabble in a number of intellectual fields—I like being eclectic in my interests.

> I wanted to find a career that would combine a number of my interests.

> Journalism allows me to pursue so many directions of specialized interests that it's impossible to imagine doing anything else.

I stumbled into journalism. I got a job interview through a family friend. But I was hooked from day one.

Research question #2 findings

Back to the second research question, which was:

- Why did journalism and mass communication educators decide to enter college teaching?

To put responses to this question into perspective, it was useful to spend the last three pages outlining why respondents selected JMC as a career in the first place. It was necessary because of the four patterns listed earlier in the literature review (Serow). A large majority of respondents in this study fall into the extender pattern—"those whose interest in teaching can be seen as an extension or continuation of well-established beliefs or behaviors. The connection is often with an earlier occupation." In other words, the majority of journalism and mass communication educators' teaching positions are closely related to—an extension of—their previous professional careers. In addition, JMC educators fall into Serow's second pattern: subject-oriented respondents "who view teaching as a chance to work in a particular academic or vocational discipline."

The same caveats mentioned earlier apply to the following summary of responses as to why JMC educators decided to enter college teaching. Allowing an open-ended response made the data compilation task more difficult but allowed for richer responses. And, despite the difficulty of "counting" responses, it is again useful to indicate the ballpark number of responses for each category.

The survey asked "Do you wish to share anything about the 'turning point' or 'turning points' in your life that prompted you to consider college/university teaching?" The responses again fell into seven fairly tidy categories: (1) a personal influence, (2) I was asked, (3) it was time to leave the profession, (4) graduate course or program/TA experience, (5) payback, (6) the challenge, and (7) other/miscellaneous.

A personal influence (27)

The most common "turning point" JMC educators noted as their reason to enter college teaching was, again, the influence of a specific person or persons. Respondents listed undergraduate

professors and/or academic advisers; student publications advisers; graduate professors, advisers or mentors (but no English professors this time around) as the reasons they first considered college teaching as a career. Sample responses indicating these personal influences include:

> The faculty at my undergraduate alma mater was made up of great guys, ex-pros, firm, genial, sharing. I thought to myself, I'd like to do this one day.
>
> When I was getting my master's degree, there was one female professor with a Ph.D. in the program. She became my role model, as she put herself through graduate school as a single parent to eventually become department head at our school. It never occurred to me before that I could be a professor—but when I met this woman, who was also a first-generation college graduate from the country, I realized that I could do it, too.
>
> The professors in my graduate program … were instrumental in getting me to think about teaching. I had planned to get a research Ph.D. and go back to the newspaper industry … and I probably would have if my role models … hadn't looked like they were having such a good time.
>
> The seed for an academic career was planted by one of my undergraduate journalism professors who singled me out during a communication and public opinion course to suggest that I might want to consider a research career at some point. I had no interest in the suggestion at the time, but later circumstances brought his advice back to me. I took it.
>
> During my undergrad years I majored in English and did a lot of journalism, but in grad school I had the chance to watch some excellent professors ply their trade in journalism, and thought to myself that this would be a good way to spend life.
>
> Again a caring and insightful teacher played an important role.
>
> I had never even considered a college teaching career until my college newspaper adviser brought it up.

I was asked, I tried it and liked it (20)

A second common "turning point" JMC educators noted as their reason to enter college teaching was simply that someone asked them to teach a class and they liked it. This category is closely related to the one above because sometimes the person doing the asking was a former professor or mentor. Sample responses to the "I was asked" category include:

> When I was ready to sell a weekly newspaper … a call came one day asking me to apply to become a faculty member at a respectable Midwest journalism program.
>
> When the head of my department invited me back to join the faculty a few years later, it was too much to turn down (getting to complete my Ph.D. on a full salary).
>
> I found I enjoyed part-time teaching/tutoring at the local university more than the daily grind of tv news deadlines.
>
> A former professor suggested that I apply for a job... I gave it a shot, was hired, and loved it.

It was time to leave the profession (21)

A third category of "turning points" JMC educators noted as their reasons to enter college teaching related to the profession. The reasons for leaving included: it wasn't fun anymore, burnout, journalism lost its luster, dissatisfaction with management, needed a career change, an injury, and so forth. Sample responses include:

> I finally decided the pressure of the profession was too great for the salary. It started not being fun.
>
> Newsroom burnout. I think small-city (small staff) dailies are a young person's game, at least from an energy standpoint. Teaching journalism is practicing journalism vicariously. You can talk shop all day long without ever setting foot in the shop.
>
> I became very aware of the free time college professors have to pursue personal projects. The allure of daily newspapering had lost its luster. I wanted more from life, and the freedom teaching afforded me was irresistible.
>
> I returned to school after watching the publisher and editors where I worked make dumb and (I think) unethical decisions. Became frustrated … was offered a teaching assistantship, loved it, and the rest is history, as they say.
>
> I developed repetitive strain injury as a newspaper journalist, and I felt I had a "helper" personality, so it seemed a good fit.
>
> By the time I reached 30, I felt like I had written every possible newspaper story, many times, in fact.

Graduate course or program/TA experience (18)

Another category of "turning points" JMC educators noted as a reason to enter college teaching was the impact of a specific course or their overall program in graduate school, as well as research and teaching assistantships. Sample responses include:

> I went back for a master's after three years of small daily work, planning to return to newspapering immediately thereafter … But I became so engaged in a communications law course my first quarter in the M.A. program that my academic interests were ignited. By the end of my first year, I knew I wanted to give teaching a try. It was that first course that was the turning point. And oddly enough, it was not a course I had expected to be interested in.
>
> I returned for my Ph.D. and enjoyed teaching as a grad assistant and decided to make it my career. Being around young, questioning people for a career can't be beaten.
>
> I took one mass comm grad class and found that scholars had been seeking answers to questions I'd been asking in my head (but didn't know anyone else was asking or trying to answer). This got me going in academics.
>
> I had always enjoyed teaching even as a child. When I was in college, I was a TA for a journalism class and loved it. This teaching experience prompted me to pursue university

> teaching. For me, university teaching was the best of both worlds. I could teach and pursue research.
>
> I went to grad school to get a master's so I could earn more money working on newspapers. However, I liked research so much I stayed for a Ph.D. and decided teaching/research were a lot more fun than going back to newspapers fulltime.
>
> I got interested in scholarship and research about journalism and mass media management issues. I didn't choose university teaching so much as I found it to be an extension of the creative work of scholarship I wanted to pursue. Both parents were teachers, my father a college professor, and I actively avoided choosing it on purpose for a long time.

Payback (12), wanting a challenge (6 each)

Payback and wanting a new challenge were two other "turning point" categories JMC educators noted as their reasons to enter college teaching. Half a dozen respondents said they entered teaching because of a desire to give back to the industry/profession, while a similar number said they were poorly prepared for the profession and entered college teaching because they felt they could do a better job. In addition, some respondents specifically said they entered college teaching for a more meaningful challenge. Sample responses in these categories include:

> I teach because I have learned things in my career that can be combined with theory to help future practitioners who are now students.
>
> I realized that I had a lot to offer to students, both in terms of skills/experience and in support and guidance.
>
> Grad school convinced me that much of what was being foisted onto undergrads was disconnected war stories and moralizing lessons about what you can and can't get away with in this "profession" of journalism. I wanted to do better … I believed that to continue in newspapers would affect a community in the short run, but teaching college for a lifetime would have a much greater trickle down effect. That may sound like ego, but I take it as a given that we should strive to make our campsites better than we found them, and teaching looked like the best way to do so.
>
> It was a desire to help students with careers in a way I was never taught in college.
>
> Had some part-time teaching experience. Wanted to do something different (and, as it has turned out, more worthwhile) in life.
>
> Taking risks allowed me to continue to grow … Being open to new challenges and opportunities for change and growth are my turning points professionally.

Other

Miscellaneous "turning points" included two respondents who cited Jesus/God as the reason they entered college teaching, two who said they always knew they would be a teacher, two

who said they just "fell into it," two who cited the lifestyle of teaching (i.e., the three reasons for teaching—June, July, August), and one who said being a disaster at high school teaching led to trying college teaching.

Discussion

The results of this random e-mail survey of nearly 450 journalism and mass communication educators answered the two research questions: when and why did JMC educators decide to pursue college teaching as a career?

It found that 54.8 percent first considered college teaching as a career while in college or within five years or less after college. Just under 40 percent did not consider a college career until more than five years after college. The literature review did not reveal any data that led the author to any hunches as to expected findings in this regard, as well as any data to compare these findings with other fields. The findings seem reasonable and indicate that, as would be expected, most JMC educators are late-entry teachers. The responses to the second research question support Serow's finding that a common thread of late-entry teachers was "the tendency to view teaching principally as a means of enhancing self-efficacy or other aspects of self-satisfaction" (197).

The study's findings for the second question—why did JMC educators enter college teaching?—support the literature. There was some evidence in this survey of a disgruntled minority of faculty members that others identified (DeLong, Dillon and Tanner). Complaints included low salaries, frustration with administrators and academic politics, or the discomfort of not fitting in "either the green eyeshade or chi square factions" of a JMC faculty. In one instance, a minus of the profession for one respondent—taking a salary cut—was a plus for another—"when I [left a daily newspaper job and] took a college teaching job, I immediately increased my salary."

Previous studies noted that JMC faculty are largely content, and the findings of this survey provide abundant evidence of that. Sample comments include:

> Teaching journalism is practicing journalism vicariously. You can talk shop all day long without ever setting foot in the shop.
>
> Being around young, questioning people can't be beaten.

> I used to know the M.E. of a paper … who used tell my students, "Journalism is the most fun you can have with your clothes on! Well …! Actually, I grove on teaching and would be just as happy teaching history, but journalism allows me to pursue so many directions of specialized interests that it's impossible to imagine doing anything else. My dad worked in the steel mills … and I've had a taste of it, too. That was work. This ain't.
>
> It took me all of about six weeks to realize that I really liked being "Professor W." I was hooked and that was 32 years ago.
>
> I was amazed at the euphoria that bathed me during and after the first class [I taught]. I felt rejuvenated and compelled to think seriously about every aspect of the journalism I was going back in the office. After "moonlighting" like that off and on for a few years, I began seriously investigating a career shift to academia, and eventually dropped all else to pursue the Ph.D. full-time. And here I am.
>
> As a senior editor, what I found I really loved was the coaching aspect of supervising people. I loved being able to encourage a star performer into even greater excellence. Even more, I loved being able to encourage a complete rookie or a chronic underachiever into awakening his or her professionalism and doing the absolute best work possible. I was thinking of that one day as I walked a couple of blocks from my newsroom office to my university classroom where I was teaching part-time. I realized … that the small portion of my newsroom job I really liked was the majority of what I was doing in my part-time classroom job. I also realized that, while some days I dreaded having to go into the newsroom, I always looked forward with eager anticipation to my once-a-week class—a brutal, three-hour session that seemed to pass in the wink of an eye. By the time I reached my classroom I knew what I had to do, and I've never been unhappy with that decision. Sure there's a bunch of B.S. about a faculty job. There's plenty of politicking and committees and resource problems and the like. But when I step in front of a class, it all goes away, and I know I made the right decision.

Previous studies also highlighted the importance of personal influences as a reason why JMC educators entered college teaching. This study strongly supports the personal influence factor. For various other factors that JMC educators cited for entering college teaching, the findings of this study generally support previous studies, although the categories and proportion of respondents vary somewhat. There is one exception. Not as many respondents in this current survey identified academic working conditions as a factor in entering college teaching as did respondents in Weaver and Wilhoit's study or *Winds of Change*.

The findings track well with career choice and development literature. Holland's typology—with A (artistic), S (social), and I (investigative) labels for writers, journalists, teachers—fits JMC educators. In addition, Place's finding that individuals who are motivated by either personal satisfaction or former role models were more likely to choose teaching than those motivated by financial reward fits JMC educators very well.

As mentioned earlier, two of Serow's patterns for late-entry teachers (extenders and subject-oriented respondents) match the findings. A few respondents fit his third pattern—practical persons who "cited security, scheduling or simply the availability of work as the primary basis for their attraction to teaching." Only a couple respondents fit his fourth category—rectifiers who view previous career decisions as a mistake and late entry into teaching represents an attempt to correct that error. Shindler examined the cognitive characteristics of teachers and found them, in general, to be practical, linear, and feeling-based. This study did not examine this area.

Gianakos found that mentors were important to those individuals who fit in what she called the stable career-choice pattern. Many JMC educators cited role models as influential in their decision to enter college-teaching, indicating a stable career-choice pattern that common sense would indicate is a likely pattern among individuals who make a career change later in life. (Gianakos developed her pattern with late adolescence/early adulthood in mind). Last, Gillespie discussed the importance of role models in attracting students to the string teaching profession. The findings in this study also reveal how important role models are in JMC educators' decisions to enter teaching.

Conclusion

Two main findings in this study rise to the top as the most significant. First, the personal influence (the people of higher education and non-university people) that Weaver and Wilhoit found as a major factor in JMC educators' decisions to enter college teaching was especially predominate in this study. Respondents wrote eloquently and more tellingly, sometimes emotionally, about the individuals who influenced their decisions to enter journalism and mass communication and college teaching careers. The responses indicated that role models are extremely important and can be influential as early as elementary school all the way through high school, undergraduate work, graduate school, and even later.

As noted earlier, Gillespie argued that to attract students to the string teaching profession, school orchestra directors should become role models by demonstrating their "love of music, making learning enjoyable, providing students with teaching opportunities, discussing the rewards

of teaching, and challenging students musically." Open-ended comments to this survey reveal that journalism and mass communication educators readily demonstrate a love of advertising, broadcast or print journalism, photography, etc., try to make learning enjoyable, and challenge their students.

It was not as evident, however, that JMC educators consciously discuss the rewards of teaching or provide students with chances to teach. Doing so may provide a partial solution to the predicted looming problem of a shortage of qualified graduate students to fill future journalism and mass communication higher education teaching positions. Another aspect of the solution would include identifying (and then grooming) future teachers earlier, and paying attention to such things as gender and racial differences in regard to the classroom environment, as Wong (1994) suggested. This strategy would involve advisers, teachers, and mentors identifying and encouraging those students who exhibit characteristics of teachers, such as the cognitive factors Shindler identified.

The second key finding involves the importance of previous media experience, particularly experience on a student publication staff in high school or college, as a factor in leading individuals to JMC teaching careers. This e-mail survey found that 61.5 percent of the respondents had high school media experience, that 72.4 percent had college media experience, that 40.9 decided to pursue journalism and mass communication as a career before or during high school, and that 55 percent first considered teaching in college or shortly after.

These statistics reveal a pretty obvious progression. Feldman (1995) found that participating in journalism activities in high school helps to "insure early entry to the profession which, in turn, has a bearing on career paths" (26). One of the directions that "bearing" takes is the career path of teaching journalism and mass communication in college. This is yet another reason why it makes sense for the profession and college journalism and mass communication programs to support, promote, and encourage scholastic journalism because that is where many future JMC educators will get their start if the present is any indication of the future.

As indicated in the introduction, career choice and development is a complex field, and this study only scratches the surface of potential research topics. Future analysis of the data from this

study and other new studies could examine if there are any factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of individuals choosing both a JMC professional or a teaching career, as well as exploring other pertinent topics.

In "Who gets into teaching?" cited in the literature review Shindler wrote, "In our efforts to reform and improve schools, we need to take into consideration who 'we teachers' are and why we are attracted to teaching. Before we can change schools we need to understand them. And before we understand schools we must understand teachers."

Likewise, in our efforts to reform, improve, and modernize journalism and mass communication programs and curriculum, it is helpful to examine who we are as teachers and why we teach. Before we can change our programs, we need to understand them. And before we understand our programs, we must understand ourselves and our colleagues.

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Appendix B

Dear

Recently I conducted an informal survey of journalism and mass communication faculty at 16 colleges and universities, asking a few simple questions about the past. Of 142 faculty, 63% had high school and 58% had college journalism experience, while 38% knew they wanted to make a career out of journalism and/or mass communication while in high school.

Among my own colleagues I found out information I didn't know even though I had worked with them for years. The survey was fun and informative. I'm expanding it via a random e-mail survey of AEJMC members. What's your story? I'd like to hear it and combine your information with that of others.

The following confidential survey takes five minutes or less. Simply reply to this e-mail, typing an "X" after a response to indicate your selection. If you don't have a response to an item or it is not applicable to your situation, leave it blank. If possible, please reply by Friday, Feb. 25.

1. When did you decide to pursue journalism and /or mass communications as a career?
a. in high school
b. in college
c. after college
d. other (explain briefly)

2. Did you work on your high school: (select all that apply)
a. newspaper
b. yearbook
c. radio station
d. television station

3. Did you work on your college:
a. newspaper
b. yearbook
c. radio station
d. television station

4. Did you work in professional (non-school) media while in
a. high school
b. college

5. When did you first entertain thoughts about a college/university teaching career:
a. before high school
b. in high school
c. in college
d. five or less years after college
e. more than five years after college

NOTE: For items 6 and 7, use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very positive" and 5 being "very negative." Again, simply type your response after the item.

6. If you have high school scholastic journalism experience, how would you rate that experience overall?

7. If you have college scholastic journalism experience, how would you rate that experience overall?

8. What is your primary teaching area?
a. advertising
b. broadcast journalism
c. new media
d. photojournalism
e. print journalism
f. public relations
g. other (please list)

9. How long have you been teaching at the college/university level?
a. five years or less
b. six to 12 years
c. 13 to 20 years
d. 21 to 30 years
e. more than 30 years

10. How many years of professional journalism/mass communication experience do you have?
a. five years or less
b. six to 12 years
c. 13 to 20 years
d. 21 to 30 years
e. more than 30 years
f. none

11. What is your rank or position?
a. professor
b. associate professor
c. assistant professor
d. instructor
e. lecturer
f. graduate student and/or teaching assistant
g. other (please list)

12. What is the undergraduate enrollment at the department or school of journalism and mass communication where you teach?
a. Less than 100
b. 100 to 400
c. 401 to 700
d. 701 to 1,000
e. 1,000 to 1,500
f. more than 1,500

OPTIONAL (The 5-minute survey is over, but if you have a little more time, you could respond to part or all of the following.)

15. If you have scholastic journalism experience, do you have any comments you wish to share about that experience?
16. Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point(s)" in your life that prompted you to pursue journalism/mass communication as a career?
17. Do you wish to share anything about "the turning point(s)" in your life that prompted you to consider college/university teaching?

THANK YOU